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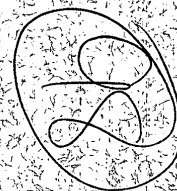


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imagery analysis report

Air Activity, South Africa (S)



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AIR ACTIVITY, SOUTH AFRICA (S)

ABSTRACT

1. (S/WN) South Africa possesses the largest air force and the most extensive network of all-weather-capable airfields and airstrips in sub-Saharan Africa. This report provides a summary of the characteristics of and activity at the major military and civilian/military airfields within South Africa and Namibia and similar data for secondary military-associated airfields, including contingency airstrips along South Africa's border with neighboring Frontline states. The combat and support role of the South African Air Force in northern Namibia and southern Angola is also discussed. Because of the large number of airfields and airstrips in South Africa, only those with a runway of 1,500 meters or greater are included in this report.

INTRODUCTION

2. (S/WN) There are 13 primary military and civilian/military airfields in South Africa with one or more Permanent Force or Citizen Force units or a flight training school. Pertinent data—including BE numbers, coordinates, runway dimensions, and an imagery-derived order-of-battle—is presented in Table 1, which is keyed to Figure 1. One additional airfield with a military-related role and which is not included on Table 1 is Jan Smuts Airfield [] the major civilian air facility serving Johannesburg and Pretoria. This airfield provides a flyaway capability for the adjoining Johannesburg Aircraft Plant Atlas [] where—in addition to aircraft production—maintenance, overhaul, and repair programs for the South African Air Force (SAAF) are performed. In addition to these primary airfields, there are a number of secondary military-associated airfields which have either a logistics/training function or an apparent contingency role owing to their location along South Africa's border with Botswana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, or Mozambique. Similar data for these air facilities is presented in Table 2, which is also keyed to Figure 1.

3. (S/WN) South Africa has been gradually expanding and upgrading its military airfield network over the past two decades; however, only one primary and five secondary airfields (four of which are contingency airstrips) were newly identified on imagery during the past five years. Hoedspruit AFS Airfield, a tactical fighter base in the eastern Transvaal, was first seen under construction in 1977 (Figure 2). Although Hoedspruit was ostensibly built to relieve flight congestion in the Pretoria area, its location allows interceptor and attack aircraft to be based only 50 nautical miles (nm) from the Mozambique border. Two fighter squadrons, formerly housed at Waterkloof Airfield in Pretoria, are now assigned to Hoedspruit, the only airfield in South Africa with aircraft bunkers.* De Aar Airfield New, adjacent to De Aar Ammunition Storage Facility [], the largest munitions storage facility in South Africa, was also built within this timeframe. Although having only limited support facilities, De Aar Airfield New has an all-weather runway capable of accommodating any transport in the SAAF inventory and, thereby, facilitating transport of ordnance to locations in both the Republic and Namibia. (A discussion of the contingency airstrips built during the late 1970s and early 1980s is presented in paragraphs 10 and 11).

4. (S/WN) With the exception of a runway extension project at Pietersburg Airfield (Figure 3) in the northern Transvaal and the addition of a new runway at Jan Smuts Airfield, construction activity at the primary airfields has been confined largely to routine renovation projects including the resurfacing of existing runways and the addition or expansion of support facilities. As South Africa's security requirements expand during the 1980s, further airfield construction can be expected despite the existing number and distribution of facilities. For example, government officials have recently announced that work on a major air base at Louis Trichardt between Pietersburg and the Zimbabwe border is scheduled to begin in 1983.¹ Other likely construction projects will include additional contingency airstrips in the border regions and aircraft bunkers at other airfields housing fighter aircraft.

5. (S/WN) In Namibia, a number of airfields and airstrips are being used by the SAAF in support of operations against insurgents of the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO). Most of these facilities are within the Border Operational Area (BOA)**—that portion of Namibia including the Caprivi Strip that borders on Angola and Zambia. As a result, the majority of airfield construction in Namibia has centered on the BOA and has been underway since the mid-1960s when SWAPO personnel began infiltrating the territory from southern Angola. Four jet-capable airfields and a number of secondary airfields and natural-surfaced airstrips serving military camps and strongpoints were built in the BOA during this period. An additional key airfield supporting the South African effort against SWAPO is Grootfontein Airfield which is just south of the BOA. Renovation and upgrading of this facility began in the early 1970s and included the construction of a new runway; the extension of the existing runway; and the construction of additional support facilities, including maintenance hangars and a large munitions storage area. A summary of relevant characteristics of key airfields in the BOA and other selected airfields in Namibia and the Walvis Bay enclave is presented in Table 3, which is keyed to Figure 4.

*These structures have been previously referred to as hangarettes.

**The term BOA is used by the South Africans to refer to the four homelands—Kaokoveld, Ovamboland, Okavangoland, and the Caprivi—that are adjacent to Angola and where counterinsurgent operations are staged against SWAPO.

6. (S/WN) Facilities associated with air force training include three bombing/strafing ranges that have been identified near military airfields in South Africa (Figure 1). Two of these ranges have standard target configurations and are used by student pilots at the flight training schools at Langebaanweg and Pietersburg. The third, much more extensive range, the General De Brug Bombing Range, is approximately 30 nm west of Bloemfontein and is adjacent to a major ground forces training area. Included in the identifiable target silhouettes at this bombing range are those of an SA-2 surface-to-air missile (SAM) site, an SA-3 SAM site, and several antiaircraft artillery sites which are representative of air defense installations that the SAAF might encounter in Angola and other Frontline states. Various fighter units periodically deploy to JBM Hertzog Airfield at Bloemfontein to participate in joint exercises with army units at the nearby training area. A second airfield used by the air force in joint maneuvers with the army is Uptington Airfield in northern Cape Province. This is the nearest facility to the Army Battle School at Sishen with an all-weather-capable runway. SAAF units such as the Mirage F1-equipped squadron that was present at Uptington in April 1979 apparently participate in combined-arms exercises at Sishen. Uptington apparently also supports air commando units that fly low-level reconnaissance missions along the Botswana-South Africa border.

DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

7. (S/WN) The SAAF, which is the largest air force in terms of order-of-battle and manpower in sub-Saharan Africa, has undergone a structural and command reorganization since early 1980. Under the new system, there are three regional commands: the Main Threat Area Command (MTA), the Southern Air Command (SAC), and the Western Air Command (WAC).²

Main Threat Area Command

8. (S/WN) The MTA, encompassing all of South Africa except that portion of Cape Province south of the Orange River, includes the majority of the industrial, mining, and population centers. As a result, this command contains not only most of the military airfields in the Republic but also the majority of the SAAF's bomber, fighter, transport, and helicopter squadrons. The primary role of this command is to provide interceptor aircraft which, along with air warning (AW) radar sites, make up South Africa's first line of air defense.

9. (S/WN) Six of the nine designated primary airfields in the MTA have an exclusive military function. Hoedspruit AFS Airfield has two high-performance fighter squadrons—one Mirage F1 ground attack squadron and one Mirage III interceptor squadron—and one helicopter squadron (Puma and Alouette III). Waterkloof Airfield houses one Canberra light bomber squadron, one Mirage F1 interceptor squadron, one Buccaneer attack squadron, one Impala attack squadron, one C-130/C-160 medium transport squadron, and one VIP squadron (C-47, HS 125, Viscount, and Merlin IVA). Swartkop Airfield accommodates one light transport squadron (C-54 and C-47), one medium helicopter squadron (Puma), and one light helicopter squadron (Alouette III). Potchefstroom Airfield has one Kudu-equipped utility squadron and is also the site of the light aviation school. The advanced flight school, equipped with Mirage III and Impala, is at Pietersburg and the primary flight school, with a complement of Harvard T-6, is at Dunnottar Airfield. One Impala-equipped attack squadron is based at each of the following civilian/military airfields in the MTA: Lanseria, south of Pretoria; JBM Hertzog, near Bloemfontein; and Louis Botha, at Durban. Jan Smuts Airfield, in addition to its civilian role and its association with the Atlas Plant, is also the home base for SAFAIR, a partially government-owned cargo airline. (A discussion of logistical supply missions which SAFAIR carries out for South Africa's defense forces is presented in paragraph 18.)

Secondary and Contingency Airfields

10. (S/WN) This category of facilities includes military airfields with no permanently assigned aircraft, airstrips which because of their location and configuration are clearly meant for military use, and airstrips which are normally civilian but where military aircraft are occasionally present or because of location suggests a contingency role. Table 3 presents a summary of the basic data for these facilities.

11. (S/WN) Messina Airfield is just south of the Limpopo River where a key road and rail bridge connects South Africa and Zimbabwe. The airfield supports the nearby Messina Army Camp (BE []) which has a normal complement of at least two motorized infantry companies. These companies provide security for the bridge and patrol South Africa's side of the Limpopo River. Just prior to the implementation of majority rule in Zimbabwe in April 1980, South Africa reinforced its troop strength at Messina. A probable command center and bivouac area were established at Messina Airfield as a part of contingency preparations in anticipation of factional violence as independence drew near in Zimbabwe. An additional facility that would likely support cross-border operations into Zimbabwe is Limpopo Airfield, a graded-earth airstrip with an adjoining small bivouac area approximately 50 nm east of Messina (Figure 5). Kameelboom Airfield and Mokoni Airfield (Figure 6) are permanent-surfaced airstrips in sparsely populated, remote northwestern Transvaal near the Botswana border. Each of these airfields, along with Amsterdam Airfield West near the Swaziland border, has similar features including a large parking apron and bivouac area that are enclosed by an earthen wall. The support areas of these airfields are usually seen unoccupied, but each could easily accommodate at least a company-sized army

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Table 1.
Primary South African Military and Civilian-Military Airfields
(Keyed to Figure 1)

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Item	Installation Name	Geographic Coordinates	BE Number	Runway(s)	Type of Aircraft	High Count Observed*	Organizational Structure
MAIN THREAT AREA COMMAND							
1	Hoedspruit AFS Airfield	24-21-50S 031-03-35E		4,300- by 45-meter blacktop runway	Mirage F-1	7	Ground support attack squadron
					Mirage III	5	Interceptor squadron
					Puma	3	Helicopter squadron
2	Waterkloof Airfield	25-49-46S 028-13-22E		3,387- by 47-meter and 1,932- by 47-meter blacktop runways	Alouette III	2	
					Canberra	4	Light bomber squadron
					Buccaneer	3	Attack squadron
					Mirage F-1	10	Interceptor squadron
					Impala	3	Attack squadron
					C-130	6	Medium transport squadron
					Transall	6	
					Viscount	1	VIP squadron
					Merlin IVA	3	
					HS 125	2	
3	Swartkop Airfield	25-48-35S 028-09-56E		1,986- by 32-meter blacktop runway and 1,957- by 44 meter graded-earth runway	C-54	3	Light transport squadron
					C-47	13	
					Puma	10	Medium helicopter squadron
4	Pietersburg Airfield	23-50-40S 029-27-31E		3,175- by 45-meter blacktop runway and a 2,598- by 47-meter blacktop runway	Alouette III	10	Light helicopter squadron
					Mirage III	11	Advanced flying school
					Impala	12	
					Sabre	8	
5	Lanseria Airfield	25-56-24S 027-55-32E		2,138- by 23-meter blacktop runway	Kudu/Cessna 185	9	Utility squadron
				1,569- by 23-meter blacktop runway	Impala	12	Attack squadron
6	Louis Botha Airfield (Durban)	29-58-25S 030-56-50E		2,425- by 60-meter blacktop runway	Impala	10	Attack squadron
7	JBM Hertzog Airfield (Bloemfontein)	29-05-32S 026-18-10E		2,600- by 24-meter and 2,200- by 46-meter blacktop runways	Super Frelon	3	Helicopter squadron
					Impala	17	Attack squadron
					C-47	3	Multiengine school
					Alouette III	7	Helicopter school
8	Potchefstroom Airfield	26-40-05S 027-04-57E		1,420- by 45-meter blacktop runway	Kudu	10	Utility squadron
					Kudu/Bosbok/ Cessna 185	13	Utility squadron
9	Dunnottar Airfield	26-21-18S 028-28-18E		(6) 1,600- by 46-meter, natural-surfaced runways	T-6 (Harvard)	57	Primary flight school
SOUTHERN AREA COMMAND							
10	HF Verwoerd Airfield (Port Elizabeth)	33-59-10S 025-36-50E		1,990- by 46-meter and a 1,700- by 46-meter blacktop runway	Impala	6	Attack squadron
11	DF Malan Airfield (Capetown)	33-57-53S 018-36-08E		3,287- by 61-meter and a 1,700- by 43-meter blacktop runways	Alouette III	4	Light helicopter squadron
					Impala	8	Attack squadron
					Shackleton	3	Maritime reconnaissance squadron
					P-166	5	Coastal maritime reconnaissance squadron
12	Ysterplatt Airfield (Capetown)	33-54-02S 018-29-55E		1,600- by 46-meter blacktop runway and a 1,420- by 70-meter and a 1,280- by 70-meter natural-surfaced runways	Wasp	4	ASW helicopter squadron
					C-47	6	Light transport squadron
					Super Frelon	1	Helicopter squadron
					Puma	1	
13	Langebaanweg Airfield	32-58-00S 018-09-37E		Two 2,347- by 48-meter blacktop runways, a 1,951- by 49-meter blacktop runway, and a 1,490- by 46-meter blacktop runway	Impala	37	Advanced flying school

*Aircraft counts represent the largest number seen on imagery and are not meant to show entire inventory

Table 2.
Secondary Military-Associated Airfields/Airstrips in South Africa
(Keyed to Figure 1)

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Item	Installation Name	Geographic Coordinates	BE Number	Runway(s)
A	Messina Airfield	22-21-23S 029-59-34E		1,912- by 30-meter serviceable blacktop runway
B	Limpopo Airfield	22-23-00S 030-52-55E		1,745- by 33-meter serviceable graded-earth runway
C	Punda Milia Airfield	22-46-10S 031-00-39E		2,130- by 30-meter serviceable graded-earth runway
D	Mokoni Airfield	22-38-33S 029-04-10E		1,700- by 50-meter serviceable blacktop runway
E	Kamelsboom Airfield	24-40-39S 026-32-33E		1,700- by 35-meter serviceable blacktop runway
F	Hendrik Van Eck Airfield	23-56-01S 031-09-22E		1,370- by 19-meter serviceable blacktop runway
G	Skukuza Airfield	24-57-45S 031-35-10E		1,200- by 30-meter serviceable blacktop runway
H	Komatipoort Airfield	25-26-21S 031-55-54E		2,130- by 29-meter serviceable blacktop runway
I	Amsterdam West Airfield	26-37-59S 030-36-17E		1,734- by 35-meter serviceable blacktop runway
J	Ganspan Airfield	27-56-14S 024-48-50E		2,224- by 32-meter serviceable blacktop runway
				2,427- by 27-meter serviceable graded-earth runway
K	Mkuze Airfield	27-37-30S 032-02-45E		1,862- by 43-meter serviceable blacktop runway
L	Uplington Airfield	28-23-55S 021-15-10E		4,900- by 60-meter and 2,440- by 46-meter serviceable blacktop runways
M	Mtubatuba Airfield	28-22-21S 032-13-35E		1,408- by 46-meter serviceable concrete runway
N	De Aar Airfield New	30-40-00S 023-56-30E		2,231- by 47-meter serviceable blacktop runway
O	Oudtshoorn Airfield	33-36-22S 022-11-18E		1,704- by 31-meter serviceable blacktop runway

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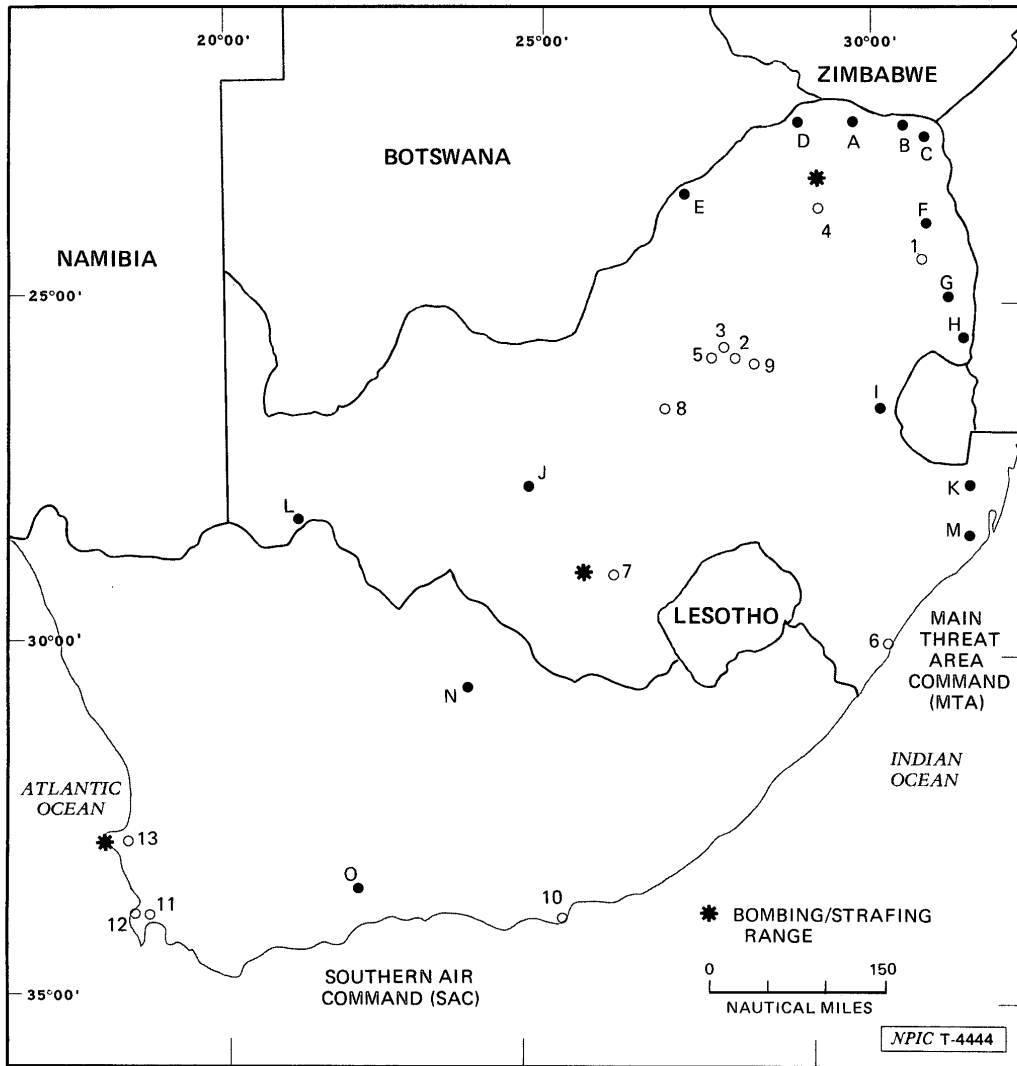


FIGURE 1. LOCATIONS OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY MILITARY-ASSOCIATED AIRFIELDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

or police contingent and supporting helicopters and observation aircraft. With a growing threat of guerrilla infiltration from neighboring states, South Africa will probably extend its defensive network of airfields, military camps, and other security measures along its northern border in the immediate future. These installations will also provide South Africa with a greater flexibility to conduct retaliatory strikes against guerrilla bases in Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and/or Swaziland.

Southern Air Command

12. (S/WN) The SAC, formerly the Maritime Air Command, is responsible for defending the air space south of the Orange River and conducting maritime aerial reconnaissance along South Africa's Atlantic and Indian Ocean coastlines. There are only two primary military airfields, Langebaanweg and Ysterplaat, and two joint civilian/military air facilities, HF Verwoerd and DF Malan, within the SAC. In addition to having a smaller number of military airfields than the MTA, the SAC also has fewer operationally assigned units and aircraft. There are only two Impala-equipped attack squadrons, two helicopter squadrons, and several maritime reconnaissance and antisubmarine warfare (ASW) patrol squadrons under this command. The jet flight school, while administratively under a training command, is at Langebaanweg Airfield approximately 50 nm north of Capetown.

13. (S/WN) The major function of the SAC, despite its new designation, continues to be maritime reconnaissance and support of the Navy's mission of guarding South Africa's long coastline. The Shackleton, despite its age, is still South Africa's only long-range patrol aircraft. Although based at DF Malan Airfield in Capetown, Shackleton are occasionally seen at Louis Botha Airfield in Durban, indicating that patrols extend along the Indian Ocean coastline as well as over Atlantic Ocean coastal waters. Supplementing the few operational Shackleton is a squadron of Piaggio P 166 (Albatross) which are capable of conducting shorter range maritime surveillance missions. A third SAC unit with a maritime role is a helicopter squadron equipped with Wasp helicopters. This unit operates from both Ysterplaat Airfield and aboard the Navy's one operational President-class ASW frigate.

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Table 3.
Selected Airfields in Namibia and Walvis Bay (Western Air Command)
(Keyed to Figure 4)

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Item	Installation Name	Geographic Coordinates	BE Number	Runway(s)	Aircraft	Remarks
1	Ruacana Airfield	17-25-05S 014-22-20E		2,200- by 32-meter blacktop runway & a 1,650- by 32-meter natural-surfaced runway	No military aircraft permanently stationed here; occasional sighting of transports and helicopters	Supports an SADF battalion-sized force which defends nearby Ruacana Falls Dam and Hydropower Plant
2	Ondangwa Airfield	17-52-42S 015-57-00E		2,430- by 32-meter blacktop runway & a 1,370- by 32-meter natural-surfaced runway	Normal SAAF complement includes: 5-8 Impala, 3-6 Puma, 5-9 Alouette III, 4-8 Kudu/Bosbok	Prime tactical fighter base in the BOA; number of combat aircraft increases during cross-border operations
3	Grootfontein Airfield	19-36-08S 018-07-33E		3,660- by 45-meter blacktop runway	2-4 C-47	Collocated with major ground force logistics base; bomber and fighter aircraft use this facility for cross-border airstrikes in Southern Angola
4	Rundu Airfield	17-57-00S 019-43-00E		2,150- by 31-meter blacktop runway and a 1,630- by 30-meter natural-surfaced runway	1-3 Alouette III/Puma 1-2 Kudu/Bosbok	Collocated with Sector 20 Hqs (Okavangoland and Western Caprivi)
5	Mpacha Airfield	17-38-03S 024-10-50E		2,300- by 29-meter blacktop runway	5-6 Impala, 1-3 Puma, 1-2 Alouette III, 1-2 Kudu/Bosbok	Prime tactical fighter base in Caprivi; point of origin for operations into Southwestern Zambia
6	Walvis Bay/Rooikop Airfield	22-58-43S 014-39-02E		2,125- by 31-meter blacktop runway	No permanently assigned AOB; occasional sighting of transport aircraft and Shackleton maritime reconnaissance aircraft	Support SADF battalion stationed in Walvis Bay enclave
7	JG Strijdom Airfield	22-28-50S 017-28-20E		4,729- by 46-meter blacktop runway	SAAF transport aircraft seen here periodically	Namibia's main civil facility serving Windhoek
8	Eenhana Airfield	17-28-00S 016-19-00E		1,530- by 30-meter blacktop runway	SAAF transport and liaison aircraft as well as helicopters seen here on an irregular basis	Used in support of small-unit cross-border operations collocated with a SADF bn hqs
9	Ompepela Airfield	17-33-00S 017-10-00E		1,684- by 26-meter graded-earth runway	Aircraft not normally seen here	Collocated with SADF prob bn hqs
10	Enyana Airfield	17-32-00S 017-43-00E		1,670- by 31-meter oiled-surfaced runway	Aircraft not normally seen here	Collocated with an SADF camp housing an infantry company
11	Haichawa Airfield	18-01-50S 022-11-23E		1,720- by 54-meter blacktop runway	SAAF transport aircraft seen here periodically	Collocated with Camp Omega; home of the SWATF Bushman Battalion
12	Ohopoho Airfield	18-03-38S 013-50-54E		2,583- by 34-meter, 1,468- by 20-meter, and 1,270- by 20-meter graded-earth runway	Helicopters seen here occasionally	Main runway has been extended; main airfield in the Kaokoveld homeland
13	Eros Airfield	22-36-40S 017-05-05E		1,824- by 31-meter blacktop runway and a 1,005- by 30-meter blacktop runway	SAAF transport aircraft seen here periodically	Joint civilian/military airfield in Windhoek

Western Air Command

14. (S//WN) The WAC, encompassing all of Namibia and the Walvis Bay enclave, is headquartered in Windhoek. Although there are no permanently assigned air force units in the WAC, both elements of and entire squadrons from the MTA and SAC operate from airfields within the command as tactical needs dictate. In addition to the airfields and airstrips in the BOA, the SAAF has several other key airfields at its disposal in the region making up the WAC. Among these facilities are JG Strijdom, the primary civilian airfield near Windhoek, and Rooikop Airfield, the all-weather airfield serving the Walvis Bay enclave (Figure 7).

15. (S//WN) The mission of the WAC is to support the army and the police in counterinsurgent operations against SWAPO in both northern Namibia and southern Angola. This role has allowed the SAAF to gain practical experience in a wide range of air operations. However, this opportunity to gain combat experience is tempered by the importance of minimizing aircraft losses, considering the United Nations' embargo on weapons sales to South Africa. With the exception of periods when an augmentation of combat aircraft occurs in support of operations in Angola, the following SAAF aircraft are normally deployed at airfields in northern Namibia: ten to 14 Impala based at Ondangwa and Mpacha Airfields; two to four C-47 at Grootfontein; and a total of eight to 11 Puma, ten to 12 Alouette III, and six to 12 Kudu/Bosbok based at Ondangwa, Rundu, and Mpacha Airfields.

16. (S//WN) Although Impala serves as the primary ground attack aircraft in providing day-to-day air support against SWAPO, additional aircraft including bombers apparently deploy to the BOA to participate in expanded air strikes or coordinated air-ground operations in southern Angola. Occasionally and during at least four major cross-border operations: one in March 1979, "Operation Smokeshell" in June

and July 1980, "Operation Protea" in August and September 1981, and "Operation Daisey" in November 1981, Mirage IIIC, Mirage F1, Canberra, and Buccaneer were dispatched from airfields in South Africa to Ondangwa and Grootfontein to carry out strikes on a variety of SWAPO-related facilities in Angola (Figure 8).

17. (S//WN) Although most of the confirmed targets struck by the SAAF in Angola are within a 100-mile radius of the Namibian border in Cunene Province, selected airstrikes have been conducted as far north as along the Mocamedes-Menongue Rail Line. There have been two reported attacks on SWAPO installations in the Lubango area, one of which occurred in September 1979 and was confirmed on subsequent imagery.³ As recently as mid-May 1982, a reported air attack on targets in the Jamba area just south of the rail line was also substantiated on imagery. A new dimension to South African air strikes in Angola was achieved during Operation Protea when AW radar sites at Cahama and Chibemba were bombed. These radar sites were not only apparently manned by Cuban personnel but were also the first confirmed targets struck that were not exclusively guerrilla related. A further significant air development occurred during Operation Daisey in November 1981 when a probably Cuban-piloted FISHBED was shot down by a South African Mirage in air-to-air combat near Cahama. The likelihood of such an encounter had increased after September when an Angolan Air Force FISHBED-equipped squadron moved to Lubango Airfield [] in the south.

18. (S//WN) General logistical support in the BOA is furnished by transport aircraft and helicopters of the SAAF and by the partially government-owned cargo airline, SAFAIR. Ferrying of troops and supplies between South Africa and the BOA is routinely carried out by C-130 and Transall of the Air Force and L-100 of SAFAIR. Within the BOA, several SAAF C-47, assigned to Grootfontein Airfield, assist by moving men and supplies to even the most remote military camps and strongpoints that are served by

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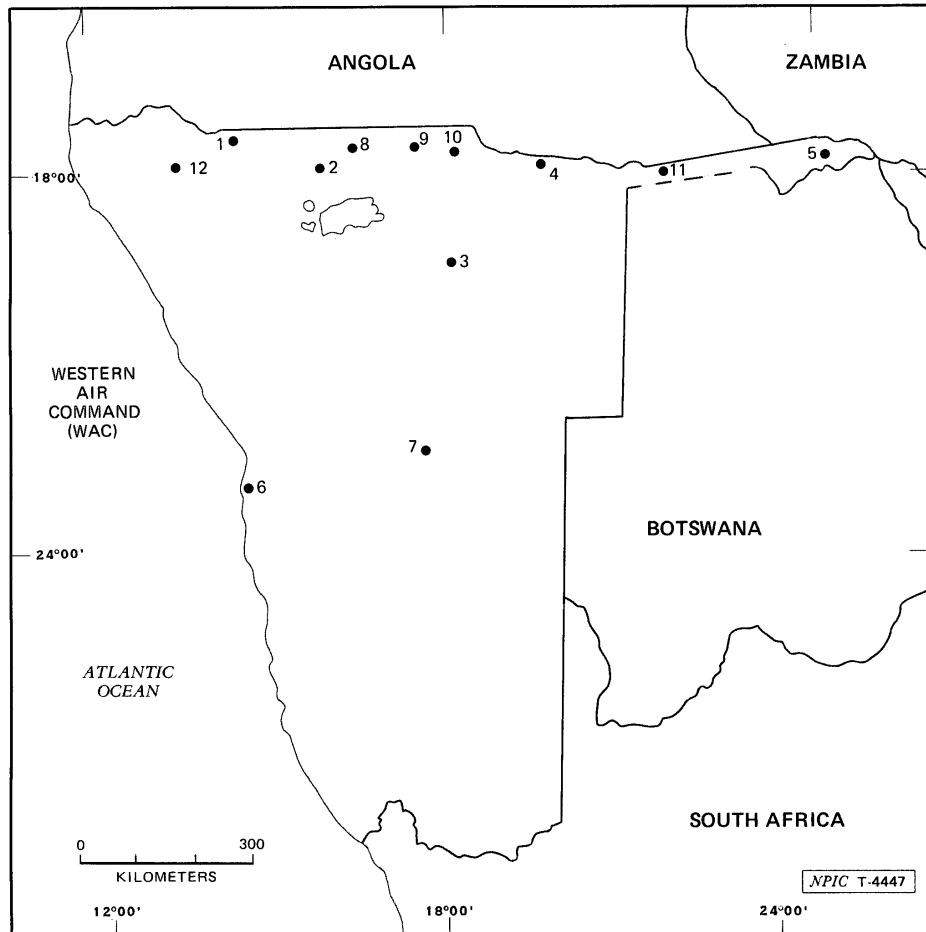


FIGURE 4. LOCATIONS OF SELECTED AIRFIELDS IN NAMIBIA AND WALVIS BAY, SOUTH AFRICA

natural-surfaced airstrips. As with combat aircraft, the number of transport aircraft seen at airfields in northern Namibia during the larger cross-border operations noticeably increases, particularly at Ondangwa and at Grootfontein. Puma and Alouette III helicopters are primarily used for rapid movement of troops and supplies, often to inaccessible areas, and for the evacuation of casualties both within the BOA and from Angola. Characteristics of the terrain as well as the frequency of long-range patrols and small-unit operations in remote areas have increased the importance of helicopters in South African counterinsurgent efforts. For example, both Puma and Alouette III are supporting ongoing operations in the Onjiva area in southern Angola. On [redacted] two Puma and two Alouette III were at Ngiva Airfield [redacted], the site of an apparent South African base camp. Open-press sources have indicated that small-unit heliborne attacks have been staged in such diverse locations in southern Angola as the Cambeno Valley in Mocamedes Province and Mulondo in southern Huila Province.

Imagery Analyst's Comments

19. (S/WN) The SAAF will continue to be a major participant in the effort to contain SWAPO militarily until a settlement concerning Namibia's independence is achieved. Although no Frontline state currently possesses, nor is likely to in the near future, an air force even approaching the SAAF in terms of inventory or capabilities, the experience gained in operations in both Angola and Namibia would prove invaluable in any future conflict with one or more of these states.

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